# **United States Department of the Interior**

Bureau of Land Management Eastern States-Jackson Field Office

# Southeastern States Resource Management Plan Preparation Plan

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# Resource Management Planning Area Map



Note: Mississippi and Alabama are excluded from this planning effort

# A. Introduction and Background

The Southeastern States Resource Management Plan (*SE RMP*) is the largest multiple state RMP ever proposed by the Bureau of Land Management. This plan will cover almost one quarter of the contiguous United States with a population of over 60 million people. It will address all of the states in the southeast, except Alabama and Mississippi which are covered by a recent RMP and will not be part of this planning effort.

The purpose of this Preparation Plan includes the following: describe the planning area and the need for the plan, introduce the preliminary planning issues and describe the decisions to be made, present preliminary planning criteria, identify data and inventory needs, define the participants (including internal and contractual staffing), describe the process for the plan, present the plan preparation schedule and the public participation plan, and estimate budget requirements.

# **Historical Background**

BLM is responsible for management of *public domain lands*, defined as lands the Federal government obtained by cession from the original 13 states and foreign governments. Three of the nine southeastern states included in this planning effort are public domain states; these are Arkansas, Florida, and Louisiana. Within all nine states BLM has management responsibility for the Federal mineral estate, including mineral estate reserved to the United States and mineral estate underlying lands acquired by other Federal agencies.

Previous approved land use plans in the area include the Florida RMP (1995), the Arkansas Planning Analysis (2002), the Louisiana Planning Analysis (2002) and the Meadowood Farm (Virginia) Planning Analysis (2003). The SE RMP will replace these plans.

# **Planning Area**

The planning area is the geographic area within which the BLM makes decisions during a planning effort. The planning area boundary includes all lands regardless of jurisdiction. The planning area for the SE RMP includes the following states in their entirety: Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia.

#### **Decision Area**

The decision area is only the surface land and subsurface mineral estate within the planning area for which the BLM has authority to make land use and management decisions. Within the nine-state planning area, the SE RMP decision area includes over 1,000 acres of BLM-administered surface land and subsurface mineral estate, several hundred thousand acres of split estate minerals (non-Federal surface over Federal minerals), and some of the approximately 20 million acres of Federal mineral estate underlying other Federal Surface Management Agencies.

On the few tracts where BLM administers both the surface land and the subsurface mineral estate, the SE RMP decisions will apply to both minerals and surface management. These tracts are small and isolated, hence some decisions listed in the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1610-1) - Appendix C will not apply or will need to be modified to fit the management situation. The approach used for surface management decisions in the SE RMP will not necessarily be typical of western BLM land use planning. It may be similar to the Alabama and Mississippi RMP, however, which includes a combination of broad management guidance common to all tracts and tract-specific decisions based on the resource conditions and management situation of individual tracts.

Much of the Federal mineral estate covered by the SE RMP is split estate where the surface is owned or managed by a non-federal entity or is privately owned. On these lands the SE RMP decisions will guide and control mineral leasing and development actions only, not other actions such as grazing, recreation development, etc. However, the EIS will analyze the impacts of the minerals management alternatives on surface resources and uses.

For mineral estate underlying other Surface Managing Agencies (e.g., the Army Corps of Engineers and Department of Defense), the decision area includes only high potential areas for mineral development. The exclusion of low or moderate potential areas will help focus the planning effort on areas where planning decisions are needed. Although BLM administers the Federal mineral leasing program in these areas, Surface Managing Agencies exert considerable control over leasing decisions; in general, they give consent prior to leasing and may provide constraints that are attached as lease stipulations.

Federal mineral estate that will be excluded from the decision area include all Federal minerals underlying surface administered by the U.S. Forest Service (FS). National Park Service (NPS) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) lands will also be excluded except for lands with existing leases. The BLM is a cooperating agency in FS planning and provides assistance on the mineral development portions of FS plans. Federal regulations exclude NPS and FWS lands from new mineral leasing, except in the case oil and gas drainage from adjacent lands. Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) lands and Native American lands are also excluded; the TVA and Native American tribes control their own mineral leasing programs.

# **Analysis Area**

The analysis area includes lands, regardless of jurisdiction, for which the BLM compiles, analyzes, and interprets data and information related to planning for BLM-administered lands. Analyses extending beyond the planning area boundary allow management decisions to be made within the context of overall resource conditions and trends in the surrounding area. Examples of such information include the relative significance of BLM-managed lands for a certain resource (such as threatened or endangered species), or the anticipated impacts to resources (such as air quality and socio-economics) based on activities on BLM-administered lands. The analysis areas can be of any size, can vary according to resource, and can be located anywhere within, around, partially outside, or completely outside the planning or decision areas.

#### **Purpose and Need**

Under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), before permitting activities on Federal lands that may alter the human environment, BLM must prepare a plan that:

- states the likely nature, number, locations and extent of the proposed activities;
- encourages and considers comments from other Federal, state and local agencies, private entities and individuals with interests in the proposed activities;
- lists alternatives to the proposed activities that are to be considered (including a "no action" alternative);
- projects the impacts to be expected from each of the alternatives; and,
- proposes methods to monitor the effects of the approved activities.

The RMP/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will satisfy the environmental documentation and public participation requirements of both (FLPMA) and (NEPA).

# **B.** Anticipated Planning Issues

As noted above, an RMP makes decisions for all resources, resource uses, and special management areas (topics) under BLM jurisdiction within the planning area. Each planning topic has key decisions that need to be made for that resource use, such as decisions for mineral development. The decisions must be balanced with the demands, goals, and objectives of other resources and resource uses, which set the stage for expressing the relevant issues. Issues statements express concerns, opportunities, conflicts, and problems associated with the management of the public lands and subsurface mineral estate. Issues also reflect new data, new or revised policies, and changes in resources uses affecting the planning area the conflicts and/or opportunities that result from these planning decisions.

The primary planning topics for the BLM in the southeast are 1) the management of the mineral estate and 2) ownership adjustments for BLM surface tracts. For each topic, planning questions (issue statements) are presented as well as information that will be considered to address the issues. Issues will be refined, and resource goals and objectives will be developed in the early stages of the planning process.

#### **Mineral and Energy Development**

The RMP will address all energy and no-energy minerals within the Decision Area that have development potential supported by the reasonably foreseeable development scenarios (RFDS) prepared by the planning team.

RMP decisions for mineral and energy development include identification of areas opened to or made available for mineral leasing and/or development; identification of areas that are closed to or withdrawn from mineral leasing and/or development, and lease stipulations, general conditions of approval, constraints, best management practices, and other special considerations

needed for leasing and development. These decisions, when placed alongside other necessary decisions for other resources and uses frame the issues that the RMP needs to address.

The foremost planning issue for mineral and energy development is how best to manage the Federal mineral estate while being consistent with the goals and objectives for natural resources, such as wetlands, sensitive species habitat and historic properties. Samples of the types of issues that need to be addressed include:

- If a location is considered for coal leasing in an area rich in cultural and historic properties, does it need to have special constraints for how to conduct mining operations?
- If an area has sensitive species habitat, should it be closed to leasing for energy development? If not, should it have moderate stipulations (such as seasonal closures) or major restrictions (such as no surface occupancy)?

#### **Preliminary Planning Criterion:**

 Make public lands available for the orderly and efficient development of mineral resources.

#### **Land Tenure Adjustment**

The workload and cost to manage lands within the planning area are high because of the scattered land ownership pattern. Some parcels of public land are less than 40 acres in size. Land tenure adjustments have the potential to provide greater efficiencies in management, and reduce workloads and costs. Some of the lands may be suitable for disposal under a variety of authorities. Some may be retained in public ownership and possibly transferred to other agencies.

RMP decisions for this topic include identifying lands for retention, lands proposed through disposal and how to dispose of them (sale or exchange), and identifying lands for acquisition; deciding whether withdrawn lands should be continued, modified, or revoked; identifying lands for specific lease types, such as under the Recreation and Public Purposed Act.

Samples of issues that need to be addressed:

- What adjustments to public land ownership, through disposal or acquisition, would result in greater management, efficiency, and increased public and natural resource benefits?
- What opportunities are there for BLM or other agencies to manage surface tract resources and uses, such as cultural resources, recreation, sensitive species or wildlife habitat?

#### Preliminary Planning Criteria:

- Comply with BLM disposal authorities such as Sections 203 and 206 of FLPMA, the Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act of 1988, and the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act of 2000
- Comply with resource management guidance including laws for resource protection such as the National Historic Preservation and the Endangered Species Act.

For any lands that are retained there will be additional planning questions relating to management of cultural resources, sensitive species, recreation and other resources.

The decisions made in the SE RMP will be designed to resolve the issues identified above. In addition, Appendix C of the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1610-1) will be used as a guide for identifying comprehensive set resource management decisions to include in the SE RMP. As previously stated, some parts of the guidance in Appendix C will not be applicable to this planning effort, and other parts will require modification to fit the management situation.

# C. Preliminary Planning Criteria

Planning criteria streamline the plan's preparation, establish standards, rules, and measures to be used; guide and direct the resolution of issues through the planning process; and indicate factors and data to be considered in making decisions. They will be used in the development of the RMP to ensure it is tailored to the identified issues, and that unnecessary data collection and analysis are avoided.

The following general planning criteria will be considered in development of the RMP.

- Existing laws, regulations, and BLM policies
- Plans, programs, and policies of other Federal, state, local governments, and Indian Tribes
- Public input
- Quantity and quality of non-commodity resource values
- Future needs and demands for existing or potential resource commodities and values
- Past and present use of public and adjacent lands
- Environmental effects
- Social and economic values
- Public welfare and safety

Elements of the planning criteria are found throughout this document. In addition, the following specific preliminary planning criteria have been identified:

- 1. The BLM will not make any recommendations or decisions that affect Federal mineral estate beyond its explicit authority under the Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, the Mineral Leasing Act for Acquired Lands of 1947, the FLPMA and other guidance.
- 2. Final title analysis has not yet been conducted for all Federal mineral ownership. Although the BLM will plan for these tracts, it will not lease, transfer or otherwise authorize any action(s) prior to verification of title for the properties.
- 3. Decisions that remain valid from previous BLM land use plans, including the Florida RMP (1995), the Arkansas Planning Analysis (2002), the Louisiana Planning Analysis (2002) and the Meadowood Farm (Virginia) Planning Analysis (2003) will be incorporated into the No Action Alternative for *SE RMP*. After being analyzed in

- the No Action alternative, if there are decisions that are still valid they will be incorporated into the new RMP.
- 4. Tracts of BLM surface and subsurface minerals will be mapped and listed by legal description. Lands of uncertain title will also be listed; these lands could potentially be available for disposal under the Color of Title Act.
- 5. For oil and gas and other minerals, reasonably foreseeable development scenarios (RFDS) will be prepared.
- 6. Identification of any lands for further consideration for coal leasing will be limited to any areas with development potential as based on the RFDS.
- 7. Broad-based public participation will be an integral part of the planning and EIS process; the planning team will work cooperatively and collaboratively with cooperating agencies and all other interested groups, agencies, and individuals.
- 8. Decisions in the plan will strive to be compatible with the existing plans and policies of adjacent local, State, Federal, and Tribal agencies as long as the decisions are consistent with the purposes, policies, and programs of federal law, and regulations applicable to public lands.

#### D. Data and GIS Needs, Including Data Inventory

Most data needs are expected to be met from existing sources. Acquiring and compiling the needed data, however, will be a significant workload. Some data is available from within BLM, but most will be acquired from external sources. Some data will be available without cost, while some will need to be purchased or used through a license. All acquired GIS data will be accompanied with appropriate supporting metadata. These data sets may be used to assess public domain lands and Federal mineral estate; however site specific information, including additional inventories, will be needed to adequately address BLM surface lands.

## **Data/GIS Coverage to be Acquired from Existing Sources**

- Land / minerals ownership
- Mineral potential
- Areas of environmental concern
- Political subdivisions
- Socioeconomic concerns, including revenue disbursements to local government units
- Surface resources
  - o Currently known archaeological/cultural sites
  - Groundwater (aquifers)
  - Lakes and rivers
  - Land cover and vegetation: Data utilized will include Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy vegetation/land cover maps. Need to assess compatibility of these data sets between states.
  - o Political subdivisions (cities, towns, villages, counties)
  - o Soils
  - Topography
  - Wetlands and riparian areas

- O Wildlife/Vegetation including Special Status Species and designated critical habitat; Data utilized include past BLM inventory and monitoring efforts, existing activity plans, occurrence records available through state heritage programs, existing records available through U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy plans, other data available through surface managing agencies.
- Mineral leases (state, Federal), pipelines and well locations
- Socioeconomic data (from Economic Profile System)

#### **Anticipated Data Gaps**

Except for a few newly cleared public domain tracts, inventories of all of the public domain surface tracts have been completed as part of previous planning efforts or subsequent activity plans and are available. However, these inventories will require updating for those public domain lands not under active management.

#### **Data Inventory and Collection to Fill Gaps**

Site specific vegetation mapping, habitat assessment and inventories will need to be completed for those public domain tracts not under active management. Much of this work can be accomplished in-house, although contracted inventories may be required in some cases. Compatibility of land cover classifications between states will need to be assessed.

Table 1 identifies the projected data needs including the reasons data are needed and the costs involved in obtaining, gathering, compiling, and , where necessary, converting needed data to a GIS format for the planning process.

Table 1. Data needs for the Southeastern States RMP.

1. Planning Question or other Requirement	2. Needed Data Set(s)	3. Availability and Format of Data Set	4. Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data	5. Estimated Cost \$\$ Staffing costs are in italics	6. FGDC Metatdata available?	7. Name or Source of GIS Data Standard.	8. Does Available Data Meet a National or Regional Standard?
Which areas should be	Land Base for Minera			1 .	1		
open, open subject to constraints or closed to mineral leasing? Which areas should be given further consideration for	Federal Mineral Ownership	LR 2000 F-200 (BLM)	Compilation of LR 2000 and F-200 data , then map in GIS through parcel generation (Carteview)	\$55,000	TBD <sup>1</sup>	None	None
the leasing of coal?		SMA Boundary from DLGs (USGS)	Purchase and add to GIS	\$3,000	Yes	USGS	Yes
		Other SMA Boundaries	Digitize areas not included in DLGs.	Unknown	TBD <sup>1</sup>	None	None
			Acquire coverage from other agencies	Unknown	Various	Unknown	Unknown
	Mineral Resources						
	Existing mineral leases	LR 2000	Compilation of LR 2000 data		TBD <sup>1</sup>	None	None
	Oil and gas wells	Tobin	Compilation of Tobin data		TBD <sup>1</sup>	None	None
	Geologic Maps and data	State Agencies	Gratis or Purchase		NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Sensitive Resources						
	State air quality data/ standards and non-attainment areas	Published Reports	Coordinate with state air quality management agencies	\$4,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	National Hydrography Data Set	USGS Data	Purchase and add to GIS	\$2,000	Yes		
	Water Quality Standards	Published data	Coordinate with state agencies	\$4,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>

Planning Question or other Requirement	2. Needed Data Set(s)	3. Availability and Format of Data Set	4. Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data	5. Estimated Cost \$\$ Staffing costs are in italics	6. FGDC Metatdata available?	7. Name or Source of GIS Data Standard.	8. Does Available Data Meet a National or Regional Standard?
Continued from above.	Soils, Prime and Unique Farmland	Soil Surveys and other published reports	Coordinate with NRCS		NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Class I Cultural Resource Inventories by state and site/survey data	Published reports and site records maintained by states	Included in the RMP development contract	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	Vegetation, Riparian &						
	Wetlands: NWI Maps, NRI data	Bundled USGS data	Purchase and add to GIS	\$2,000	Yes	USFWS	Yes
	ADEQ – ecologically important waters	Unknown	Need to check on availability of similar data for Louisiana and high mineral potential areas in other states		NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Vegetation, Upland & Forest :						
	State-wide data to model impacts from mineral development	< 30 m pixel vegetation map for AR and LA, additional coverage for high potential areas in other states	Available from states	\$Unknown \$8,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Fish and Wildlife Habitat:						
	Priority Habitats	States and USFWS	Coordination and Compilation	\$2,500	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

Planning Question or other Requirement	2. Needed Data Set(s)	3. Availability and Format of Data Set	4. Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data	5. Estimated Cost \$\$ Staffing costs are in italics	6. FGDC Metatdata available?	7. Name or Source of GIS Data Standard.	8. Does Available Data Meet a National or Regional Standard?
Continued from above.	List of neotropical migratory birds of concern	States and USFWS strategic plans	Coordination and Compilation with states and FWS to assess priorities	\$2,500	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Special Status Species: Federal and state-	Point data is	Acquire from state heritage	\$40,000	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
	listed, plus species listed as S-1 and S- 2 by State Heritage groups.	available	groups and FWS	\$5,000			
	Critical Habitat maps	Available on web and through FWS,	Contact FWS and search availability on web. May require digitizing	\$3,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
What opportunities exist	Land Base for Surface						
to make adjustments to public land ownership that would result in greater management,	BLM surface ownership	BLM records	Map in GIS by parcel generation (Carteview) or digitizing		TBD <sup>1</sup>	None	None
efficiency, and increased public and natural resource benefits?	Access routes	Maps	Review maps and complete field examinations for confirmation		NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
What opportunities are	Surface Management	Resources					
there for BLM or other agencies to manage surface tract resources and uses, such as	Existing BLM botanical surveys of surface tracts in LA and AR	Hardcopy in FO.	Add to shared F.O. files.	\$2,500	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
cultural resources, recreation, sensitive species or wildlife habitat?	Site visits w/ standardized forms to augment botanical survey and habitat information.	Surveys scheduled for FY 2008	Conduct field visits, meet with stakeholders, collect other available data	\$25,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>

Planning Question or other Requirement	2. Needed Data Set(s)	3. Availability and Format of Data Set	4. Work Needed to Obtain New Data or Prepare Existing Data	5. Estimated Cost \$\$ Staffing costs are in italics	6. FGDC Metatdata available?	7. Name or Source of GIS Data Standard.	8. Does Available Data Meet a National or Regional Standard?
Continued from above.	Additional surveys as warranted based on potential occurrences of SSS.	Surveys scheduled for FY 2008	Assess need for surveys, prepare SOW, administer contracts	\$10,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species:  State noxious weed lists for AR and LA.  Federal noxious weed lists, where appropriate.  Southeastern Exotic Pest Plant Council lists	Available through web	Compile lists and enter range information into GIS	\$2,500	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Assessment of cultural resource potential through review of records and site visits	State site records. Field visits scheduled for FY 2008	Review site records for BLM tracts and complete site visits	\$10,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>
	Assessment of recreation potential through review of SCORP and site visits	Published SCOPRs. Field visits scheduled for FY 2008	Acquire SCORP for each state and review as pertains to BLM lands. Conduct site visits	\$10,000	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>	NA <sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>TBD = To be Developed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>NA = Not GIS Data

# **E.** Participants in the Process

#### Roles, responsibilities and authorities

The Jackson Field Manager will be the line manager principally responsible for all aspects of the project, including schedule, overall development, coordination, and publication of the *SE RMP/EIS*. Supervisory Field staff office staff will be assigned to guide BLM personnel working on the plan. In addition, a Contracting Officer Representative (COR) will be assigned for all contractors working on the plan, including the primary *SE RMP/EIS*.

The BLM-ES State Director will be signatory of the plan on behalf of the BLM. The BLM-ES office will provide overall quality control in accordance with Instruction Memorandum (IM) WO-2002-100, dated February 26, 2002, and IM ES-2004-011, dated January 7, 2004.

#### Interdisciplinary and management oversight team

The Interdisciplinary Team (IDT) will consist of specialists from the RMP development contractor with counterparts from the BLM. This contractor will conduct the majority of data analysis and document writing, with close oversight and coordination by the BLM team and Project Manager. The contractor will be responsible for quality control for all documents prepared, and will provide staff support for public and other meetings. The BLM will be responsible for document reviews and quality control.

#### **Internal coordination**

The BLM staff will:

- Write/review the statements of work
- Review bids
- Provide management oversight of the work during plan development
- Review and comment on internal draft materials
- Provide other technical assistance as needed to ensure contractor's work product meets government standards
- Administer the contracts
- Serve as primary point of contact with the public and other interested parties in the planning process

Internal reviews of land use plans have been historically one of the most time-consuming phases of planning projects. Managers and staff have a particular obligation to provide timely and constructive feedback throughout the project. This is critical for contracted projects as the vendors will need to fulfill contracts for timeliness and completeness of work products.

#### **Cooperating Agencies**

Governors, state agencies, Native American representatives, and Federal surface managing agencies will be invited to be cooperating agencies. The planning team will cooperatively and

collaboratively with cooperating agencies. This process will be used to obtain ideas, information and comments from Tribal Governments, other Federal agencies and state governments.

#### **Management Oversight**

(TBD), Washington Office Management Advocate Bruce Dawson, Field Manager, BLM-ES-JFO Grace Guess, Associate Field Manager, BLM-ES-JFO Duane Winters, Supervisory Resource Specialist, BLM-ES-JFO Ken Adams, Supervisory Geologist, BLM-ES-JFO Gary Taylor, COTR for RMP Development Contract

#### **Technical Oversight**

Carol-Anne Murray, WO Planning Megan Stouffer, WO Planning

#### **BLM IDT (all BLM-ES-JFO unless otherwise noted)**

Planning and Environmental Coordination – Gary Taylor

Archaeological, Cultural and Historical Resources – Judy Pace (Lead)

Native American Coordination – Judy Pace Lead and John Sullivan

Biological Resources, Endangered

Species, Wetlands, Fisheries,

and Invasive Species, - Faye Winters (Lead), Alison McCartney and Maena Voigt

Solid Minerals (non-energy) – Lars Johnson

Solid Minerals (energy) – Stuart Grange

Fluid Minerals – Ken Adams and Bill Bagnell

Lands and Realty – Mary Weaver

Public Affairs – Shayne Banks

Public Health and Safety and Hazardous Materials – Brian Kennedy

Recreation – Jeff McCusker, Marty Neugebauer

Socioeconomic Values – TBD

Soils, Water, Air – Marty Neugebauer

Visual/Noise Impacts – Jeff McCusker

Contract Administration – BLM-National Business Center, Denver, CO

#### **Contracted Services**

Specific portions of the work will be contracted including separate contracts for preparation of the oil and gas RFDS, resource data collection and inventories, compilation of GIS data, and overall RMP development and document preparation. For each contract a JFO staff member will be assigned as Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR).

The RMP development contract will cover the core task preparation of the RMP/EIS documents, i.e. Draft RMP/EIS, Proposed RMP/Final EIS, and Record of Decision (ROD). The deliverables for the contract include:

#### Scoping

- Facilitation Services.
- Presentation Graphics.
- Help develop web content [BLM host].
- Identify and interview principal stakeholders.
- Evaluate interview data and provide a concise summary for the BLM to determine concerns and issues.
- Implement the public participation plan to assess various approaches, including traditional methods such as public meetings, newsletters, tours and field trips, newspaper articles, group presentations, individual contacts, focus groups and small meetings.
- Develop instructional materials for use with stakeholders explaining the planning/NEPA process and the kinds of development associated with mineral leasing in the region.
- Assist BLM in conducting formal scoping meetings.
- Provide content analysis of scoping comments, showing grouped planning issues, concerns and opportunities to guide development of alternatives and impact assessment.
- Develop and maintain mailing list (if not covered by ePlanning).

#### Alternative Development

- Facilitate discussions between members of the IDT and RMP cooperators to identify potential development alternatives.
- Provide a draft list of development alternatives and assist in briefing BLM-ES Leadership Team members.

#### Impact Assessment

- Develop an objective impact assessment methodology.
- Conduct an impact assessment by contractor and BLM members of the IDT.

#### Draft RMP (DRMP)/Draft EIS (DEIS)

- Prepare and publish all portions of the DRMP/DEIS.
- Prepare biological assessments for Section 7 consultation with appropriate U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries offices, as well as biological assessments for states where there is potential to affect state-listed species.

#### **Comment Period**

- Develop presentation graphics for meetings, web content.
- Facilitate all public forums.
- Record all comments from meetings.

#### Comment Analysis

• Provide analysis of public and agency comments submitted during comment period.

#### Revise Plan

- After consulting with BLM, revise plan based on public comments on draft RMP/EIS.
- Incorporate results of consultations with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and states heritage and state wildlife programs.
- Submit revised plan to BLM for approval before publishing.

#### Proposed RMP (PRMP)/Final EIS (FEIS)

- Prepare and publish PRMP/FEIS.
- Send document to all parties on mailing list.

#### **Protest Resolution**

• The BLM (WO/Field and State Offices) will resolve the protests.

#### Record of Decision (ROD)/Approved RMP (ARMP)

• Prepare, publish and mail out ROD/ARMP (if protest resolution requires a new PRMP, prepare that document, publish and send to all parties on the mailing list.

#### F. Format and Process for the Plan

#### **General steps and format**

The *SE RMP* will as much as practical follow the guidance found in BLM Handbooks H-1601-1, 3/11/2005 (Resource Management Planning), and H-1624-1, 11/14/86 (Supplemental Program Guidance for Energy and Minerals). As the BLM-ES will use ePlanning for all phases of the project, potential vendors will be made aware of this during the bidding process.

Formal scoping will be conducted in a spirit of collaboration. The BLM will provide opportunities for the public and interest groups to provide scoping input regarding their concerns. Opportunities will be during public meetings, through mail, email, and other forms of communication.

#### **Alternative formulation**

The *SE RMP* will present a reasonable range of alternatives and include a No Action alternative. Each alternative will answer the general questions of how the BLM will manage the resources in the planning area. The different actions to consider for each issue are presented below.

#### **Minerals Management**

1. Federal Oil and Gas Leasing under Standard Stipulations:

The BLM would approve the leasing of its mineral interest under standard lease stipulations.

# 2. Federal Oil and Gas Leasing under Standard and Special Resource Protection Stipulations:

Consulting with the other Federal agencies and states would identify sensitive resources that would need protection under special stipulations. Special stipulations limit a lessee's access to a lease tract; the limits imposed may be related to timing of operations (i.e. limiting surface occupation during seasons) or areas that may be occupied, including leasing with no surface occupancy (NSO). NSO leasing may be used to include Federal properties in drilling units with adjacent non-Federal land, or to limit drilling to directional methods from adjacent land.

#### 3. Coal Leasing:

The *SE RMP* will identify lands suitable for further consideration for leasing. Surface mining of coal resources on acquired Federal properties will not be considered, because surface mining creates impacts that are incompatible with the purposes for which the tract was acquired.

#### 4. Solid Minerals:

#### **Land Ownership Adjustment**

#### 1. Disposal:

BLM administered land could be available for disposal. If necessary, protective covenants would be employed to protect specific resources, such as archaeological sites and Threatened or Endangered Species habitat.

#### 2. Retention:

Under this alternative land would be retained in public ownership. Withdrawal to other Federal agencies or transfer to state or local governments could be an option. Applicable resource condition objectives would be developed for retention alternatives.

#### **Internal Review of the Plan**

Given that the RMP will be developed under contract, it will be vital that the BLM provide close oversight of the document as it progresses. Under a performance-based contract, the vendor is responsible for quality control/quality assurance. The BLM, however, will review draft documents and provide comments back to the contractor in a timely fashion. Within the review time frames the State Office will be given four weeks, and the Washington Office will be given four weeks to review the documents. These times will not be concurrent. The BLM will be responsible for sending to the contractor any new policies, regulations or other information that

may be relevant to the document. The BLM resource specialists assigned to the IDT will be responsible for their program area.

# **G.** Plan Preparation Schedule

Table 2. Schedule and Target Dates (important milestones in bold) Time frame Oct-2008 through January 2012.

Task	Anticipated Begin	Anticipated End	Time Span
Complete Federal Mineral Ownership (FMO)			
identification and mapping (phase 1)	6/29/07	5/30/08	11 months
Complete Federal Mineral Ownership (FMO)			
identification and mapping (phase 2)	6/29/07	12/29/08	18 months
Complete BLM surface ownership identification and			
Mapping	6/29/07	5/30/08	11 months
Prepare SOWs and submit procurement requests for			
data collection contracts	9/3/07	10/1/07	4 weeks
Complete reasonably foreseeable Development			
Scenarios RFD for oil and gas, coal, and non-energy	9/28/07	5/30/08	8 months
solid minerals			
Complete data collection (initial)	12/28/07	5/30/08	5 months
Complete data collection (final)	12/28/07	12/29/08	12 months
Prepare SOW and submit procurement request for			
RMP preparation contract	1/18/08	4/18/08	2 months
Solicit and award RMP preparation contract	4/18/08	7/18/08	3 months
Prep. NOI/briefing materials for WO Review	5/23/08	5/30/08	1 week
WO Review of NOI	5/30/08	8/29/08	3 months
Contractor kick-off meeting	8/1/08	8/8/08	1 week
Publish NOI	9/5/08	9/12/08	1 week
Public Scoping Period	9/12/08	10/13/08	30 days
Meet with Key Officials/agencies			
Conduct Public Scoping Meetings			
Initiate consultation with USFWS			
Initiate consultation with SHPOs			
Initiate consultation with Native American Tribes			
Analyze public input and prepare scoping report	10/13/08	12/8/08	8 weeks
Develop Analysis of the Management Situation			
(AMS), including existing management affected			
environment, and make a summary available to the			
public	10/13/08	12/29/08	11 weeks
Write Chapter 1 – Introduction and 3 – Affected			
Environment	12/29/08	1/23/09	4 weeks
Chapter 3 review by JFO and ES	1/23/09	2/13/09	3 weeks

Task	Anticipated Begin	Anticipated End	Time Span
Respond to comments and complete Chapter 3	2/13/09	2/27/09	2 weeks
Develop alternatives including RFAs and RFDs for each alternative	2/27/09	4/10/09	6 weeks
Write Chapter 2 Alternatives	4/10/09	6/05/09	8 weeks
Chapter 2 review by JFO and ES	6/05/09	6/26/09	3 weeks
Respond to comments and complete Chapter 2	6/26/09	7/10/09	2 weeks
Analyze Impacts of Alternatives (write Chapter 4)	7/10/09	9/4/09	8 weeks
Chapter 4 review by JFO and ES	9/4/09	9/25/09	3 weeks
SD briefing - Select preferred alternative	9/25/09	10/09/09	2 weeks
Respond to comments and complete Chapter 4	10/09/09	10/23/09	2 weeks
Brief State and local governments and tribes. Prepare draft biological assessments by state	10/23/09	1/22/10	13 weeks
Write Chapter 5	1/22/10	2/19/10	4 weeks
Chapter 5 review by JFO and ES	2/19/10	3/5/10	2 weeks
Respond to comments and complete Chapter 5	3/5/10	3/19/10	2 weeks
Complete preliminary DRMP/EIS and submit Federal NOA materials to WO	3/19/10	5/14/10	8 weeks
Preliminary DRMP/EIS review by JFO, ES and Regional and WO Solicitor	5/14/10	6/4/10	3 weeks
Respond to comments and complete DRMP/EIS (includes SD briefing)	6/4/10	7/2/10	4 weeks
Complete WO DRMP/EIS Review	7/2/10	7/30/10	4 weeks
Respond to comments, WO briefings – receive approval to release DRMP/EIS	7/30/10	8/27/10	4 weeks
Print DRMP/EIS and start public comment period	8/27/10	9/24/10	4 weeks
Release DRMP/DEIS for 90-Day Public	9/24/10	12/24/10	90 days
Comment Period			·
Respond to comments for FEIS	1/24/1/10	2/4/11	6 weeks
Prepare Preliminary PRMP/FEIS and submit Federal Register materials to WO	2/4/11	2/18/11	2 weeks
Preliminary PRMP/FEIS review by JFO, ES and Regional and WO Solicitor	2/18/11	3/11/11	3 weeks
Respond to comments and complete preliminary PRMP/FEIS	3/11/11	4/1/11	3 weeks
Prepare Final Biological Assessment	4/1/11	4/22/11	3 weeks
Complete consultation with SHPOs/Tribes	4/22/11	5/13/11	3 weeks
Complete WO review of preliminary PRMP/FEIS	5/13/11	6/3/11	3 weeks
Respond to comments, WO briefings – receive approval to release PRMP/FEIS	6/3/11	7/1/11	4 weeks
Print PRMP/FEIS and start protest period and Governor's consistency reviews	7/1/11	7/29/11	4 weeks

Task	Anticipated	Anticipated	Time Span
	Begin	End	
Close protest period	7/29/11	8/29/11	30 days
Complete protest responses	8/29/11	11/28/11	13 weeks
Complete Draft ROD and submit Federal Register			
NOA materials to WO	11/28/11	12/12/11	2 weeks
Complete ES/WO ROD review	12/12/12	1/2/12	3 weeks
Respond to comments, WO briefings – receive	1/2/12	1/16/12	2 weeks
approval to release ROD			
Print/Release ROD	1/16/12	1/30/12	2 weeks

Time elapsed is approximate. Many tasks must occur simultaneously. Preparation for many tasks should begin before the designated start. Timely completion of most individual tasks, and certainly the overall project, will require WO, State and Field Office commitment. The schedule will be refined based on actual start of process, hiring of contractor and negotiations over deliverables.

Understanding that the planning cycle doesn't end after the ROD is released, the field office will schedule the Plan Implementation Workshop with the Washington Office Planning Branch as early as release of the Proposed RMP/Final EIS but no later than four months after publication of the ROD (as per WO-IM-2008-041).

# H. Public Participation

#### **Goals and Objectives**

The planning area covers nine states, hundreds of counties, thousands of municipalities. It also encompasses numerous government agencies and non-governmental organizations and contains a population of over 60 million. Due to the scale of this planning effort, extensive public participation will be limited. The plan will focus on providing public participation opportunities and will focus on geographic areas where the majority of BLM actions are expected. The public participation plan may be updated during development of the RMP, to account for any possibility of changes that might come up over time

Public involvement for the *SE RMP* will serve two major objectives. First, it will allow the BLM to introduce itself to a general population that may not be familiar with its programs and mission. Second, it will allow the BLM to learn about local issues, interests, and concerns.

Public involvement for this project will be needed to fulfill the BLM's responsibilities under the NEPA and policy direction issued by the BLM, Department of the Interior, and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Pursuant to policies outlined in the NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1501.6 and 1508.5) and reemphasized by a recent memorandum to all Federal agency heads from CEQ, many state, local and Federal agencies, as well as Native American representatives, would

be invited to be cooperating agencies. These directives require the BLM to seek every opportunity to involve the public and other agencies in meaningful and collaborative ways to promote planning and NEPA projects.

#### Stakeholders and Interested Public

Numerous parties have been active in minerals, land and resource management issues in the region. State government structure places some of the authority to plan and regulate land use at the state level, but local government coordination is also crucial to planning success. Using the guidance cited above, numerous local government entities would be invited to be cooperating agencies. Other regional planning and economic entities and state agencies would also be appropriate cooperators on the plan. A mailing list of interest public will be maintained.

<u>Government Agencies:</u> The following Federal agencies may have interests in the RMP/EIS process or provide data or expertise in analysis. This list will likely be expanded to include state or local agencies:

Department of Air Force
Department of the Army
Department of the Navy
Department of Energy
Environmental Protection Agency
Fish and Wildlife Service
Geological Survey
Minerals Management Service
National Park Service
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Office of Surface Mining
United States Coast Guard

Native American Tribes: The following are federally recognized Native American Tribes or groups who hold ancestral homeland within the southeastern states:

Catawba Indian Nation (South Carolina)
Chitimacha Tribe (Louisiana)
Coushatta Tribe (Louisiana)
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (North Carolina)
Jena Band of Choctaws (Louisiana)
Miccosukee Tribe (Florida)
Seminole Tribe of Florida
Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana

Oklahoma Tribes whose homeland was or who have an interest in the southeastern states
Caddo Indian Tribe
Cherokee Nation

**Choctaw Nation** 

Osage Tribe

Quapaw Tribe

United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians

Wichita and Affiliated Tribes

Seminole Nation

Muscogee (Creek) Nation

Eastern Shawnee Tribe

Delaware Nation

Checkasaw Nation

Absentee – Shawnee Tribe

Shawnee Tribe

**Delaware Trust Board** 

Texas Tribe - Alabama Coushatla Tribe

#### **Public Participation Activities**

#### 1. Scoping Phase

- Publish a Notice of Intent to prepare the RMP in the Federal Register. The Notice will identify the preliminary issues and planning criteria.
- Issue a news release, a newsletter/brochure, and website information regarding the preparation of the RMP. An announcement of scheduled scoping meetings will be sent to people on the mailing list.
- Informal public open house scoping meetings will be organized to gather public input on the issues, management concerns to be resolved in the plan, and on the planning criteria and process.
- Letters will be sent to state and county governments.
- Coordination/consultation will occur with USFWS and SHPO.
- Written comments on issues/scope of the RMP will be requested by the end of the scoping period.

#### 2. Alternative Development

- A newsletter/brochure will be developed to provide background information on issues and preliminary alternatives.
- Informal public open houses may be held with interested groups, agencies, individuals, etc. to discuss alternatives and make sure issues are addressed.

#### 3. Issue the Draft RMP/EIS

- Publish a notice of availability in the Federal Register for the Draft SE RMP/EIS followed by a 90-day public comment period.
- Copies of the Draft SE RMP/EIS will be sent to those on the mailing list.
- The document will be available on the BLM website.
- Issue a news release in local/regional papers on the availability of the Draft SE RMP/EIS, the 90-day comment period, and the schedule of public meetings to be held during the comment period.

- Public meetings will be held to gather comments on the Draft SE RMP/EIS.
- Coordination/consultation will occur with USFWS and SHPO.
- Written comments on the draft RMP will be requested by the end of the 90-daycomment period.

#### 4. Publish the Proposed RMP/Final EIS

- A notice of availability will be published in the Federal Register for the Proposed SE RMP and Final EIS and a 30-day protest period.
- Copies of the Proposed SE RMP/Final EIS will be sent to those on the mailing list.
- The document will be available on the BLM website.
- A Governor's consistency review (60 days) will be initiated to identify inconsistencies with State or local plans.
- Coordination/consultation will occur with USFWS and SHPO.

#### 5. Respond to Protests

- Written responses will be sent to the public as needed.
- Protest resolution with the Washington Office, if necessary.

### 6. Publish Approved Plan and Record of Decision

- A notice of availability will be published in the Federal Register for the approved plan and ROD.
- The approved plan and ROD will be sent to those on the mailing list (which will include all those who participated in the planning process during the preparation of the plan).
- The document will be available on the BLM website.
- A news release will be issued in local/regional papers on the availability of the approved plan and ROD.

#### **Results of Public Participation**

The contractor, with assistance from BLM, will analyze all comments on both the scoping effort and the Draft RMP/EIS, and develop a summary of comments categorized by issue. The summary will be available to the public upon request and key points will be shared with the public through the RMP newsletter. The purpose of the scoping comments is to assist in finding out issues and concerns at the start of the process, while comments on the Draft RMP/EIS will be more specific to actual alternatives and effects, and have a more formal response to be published in the Final EIS. All comments will be available for public review. While an individual can request in their comment that personal identifying information be withheld from public review, there is no guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

# I. Budget

The SE RMP will be completed by a combination of BLM staff and contractors. Table 3 shows work months and dollar costs for JFO staffing in FY 2008. Table 4 identifies work months costs for FY 2009 through 2011. Table 5 shows the FY 2008 operational costs. Table 6 summarizes all the estimated costs labor and operational for development of the SE RMP. Contract cost includes the total of several contracts, including the overall RMP development contract, a data services (GIS) contract specifically for the SE RMP, as well as partial funding for existing GIS and IT support contracts.

The total estimated cost of the *SE RMP* and associated EIS is \$4,000,000. This funding will be used to pay contracting costs, as well as BLM staff labor, travel and other operational needs. BLM-ES will develop a Budget Planning System project proposal to cover the entire duration of the planning process primarily from FY 2008 through 2011, with final printing of the Approved RMP/ROD in FY 2012.

The proposed schedule for the *SE RMP* is outlined in Table 2. Prior to awarding the RMP development contract, BLM-ES will develop a *Government Cost Estimate*, an internal document that will be used to evaluate proposals.

Table 3. FY 2008 JFO Work Months and Dollar Costs

RMP Staffing	Work Months (WMs) FY 2008	Costs (\$K)
RMP Team Leadership (Supervision , Coordination and COR Duties)	10	\$74.4
Public Affairs Specialist	2	\$20.4
Coal Geologist	2	\$20.6
Fluid Minerals Geologist	2	\$18.8
Solid Mineral Geologist	2	\$21.4
Archaeologists	3	\$33.4
Natural Resource Specialist	1	\$8.1
Realty Specialist	2	\$18.4
Wildlife Biologists	4	\$30.2
Totals	28 WMs	\$239.9

Table 4. FY 2009 through 2011 JFO Work Months and Dollar Costs

RMP Staffing		FY Work Months			FY Costs (\$ K)			
	2009	2010	2011	2009	2010	2011		
RMP Team Leadership (Supervision, Coordination and COR Duties)	12	12	12	\$97.4	\$97.4	\$97.4		
Public Affairs Specialist	2	2	1	\$20.4	\$20.4	\$10.2		
Coal Geologist	2	2	1	\$20.6	\$20.6	\$10.3		
Fluid Minerals Geologist	2	2	1	\$18.8	\$18.8	\$9.9		
Solid Minerals Geologist	2	2	1	\$21.4	\$21.4	\$10.7		
Archaeologists	3	3	2	\$27.6	\$27.6	\$21.8		
Natural Resource Specialist	2	2	1	\$16.2	\$16.2	\$8.1		
Realty Specialist	3	2	1	\$27.6	\$18.4	\$9.2		
Wildlife Biologists	4	4	3	\$30.2	\$30.2	\$24.4		
Subtotals	37	36	24	280.2	271.0	202.0		
Total		86 WMs			\$753.2			

**Table 5. Operational Costs for FY 2008** 

Item Description	Cost (K)
Contracts	
Contract for RMP/EIS Development and Preparation (Includes cultural resource overview and socio-economic profile)	\$575
GIS Contract (employee)	\$60.0
Data Services Contract	\$210.0
IT Support Contract (employee)	\$10.0
Data	
Natural Heritage Data	\$40.0
DLGs (boundaries, PLS, hydrography, contours, transportation)	\$3.0
National Hydrography Data Set	\$2.0
National Wetlands Inventory (NWI)	\$2.0
Carteview software upgrade	\$3.0
Supplies	
Plotter and large format scanner	\$18.0
Materials and Supplies (ink, cartridges, paper)	\$2.0
Travel/Training	
Travel	\$10.0
Training	\$10.0
Printing	
Federal Register, bulletins, notices	\$5.0
Total	\$950.0

**Table 6. Total Budget Projections** 

Item	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11			
	Labor	•					
Jackson FO	240,000	280,000	270,000	200,000			
Eastern States	110,000	60,000	60,000	60,000			
Total Labor	350,000	340,000	330,000	260,000			
Procurement Including Data Collection							
Data	50,000						
Travel	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000			
Printing (Document, notices, Fed. Register)	5,000	5,000	40,000	90,0001			
<b>Total Procurement</b>	65,000	15,000	50,000	50,000			
	RMP Cont	racts					
RMP Development	575,000	495,000	420,000	310,000			
GIS Coordination <sup>2</sup>	60,000	80,000	80,000	40,000			
GIS Data Services	210,000	50,000	50,000	20,000			
IT Support <sup>2</sup>	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000			
Total RMP Contracts	855,000	635,000	560,000	380,000			
	Other Co	osts					
Training	10,000	5,000	5,000	5,000			
Supplies	20,000	5,000	5,000	5,000			
<b>Total Other Costs</b>	30,000	10,000	10,000	10,000			
	Total SE RMI	P Budget					
Total Costs per FY	\$1,300,000	\$1,000,000	\$950,000	\$750,000			

<sup>1\$50</sup> K will be held to FY 2012 to print ROD
2Contract Employees

**Recommended by:** 

Total request for RMP funding: \$4,000,000

D D	
Bruce Dawson	
Field Manager	
Jackson Field Office	

# Approved by:

Juan Palma State Director Eastern States Office Field Cod